

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FBOE-00 A-01 ABF-01 L-03 /018 W
-----130319 081452Z /53
R 081417Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5841

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USOECD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ABLD, OECD
SUBJECT: OECD FIRE: INTERIM REPORT

REF: PARIS 12399

1. THIS CABLE SUPPLEMENTS PREVIOUS REPORTS ON THE
AFTERMATH OF THE FIRE WHICH DESTROYED THE US MISSION TO
OECD ON MARCH 1.

2. THE DELEGATION CONTINUES TO OCCUPY 780 SQUARE METERS
OF TEMPORARY SPACE PROVIDED BY OECD IN EARLY APRIL. THE
DELEGATION'S OFFICES ARE PRESENTLY BEING RECONSTRUCTED
AND WILL BE READY FOR OCCUPANCY DURING SEPTEMBER AND
OCTOBER 1978.

3. COST OF REPLACING FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT (TOTAL
COST ABOUT \$300,000) WILL BE PAID BY OECD FROM INSURANCE
PROCEEDS. FINAL AGREEMENT REACHED BETWEEN OECD AND
THEIR INSURERS PROVIDES MISSION WITH FRENCH FRANCS
1,331,360. WHILE THIS REPRESENTS LESS THAN TOTAL
REPLACEMENT VALUE, THIS AMOUNT IS AVAILABLE WITHOUT
ELABORATE DOCUMENTATION OF EACH ITEM LOST, AND GIVES
MISSION MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY IN REFURNISHING ITS
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OFFICES - WHICH WE BELIEVE WE CAN DO WITH THIS AMOUNT.

4. MISSION STAFF HAVE EACH ACCEPTED INSURANCE
COMPANY'S OFFER TO BE COMPENSATED AT 85 PERCENT OF
VALUE CLAIMED FOR LOSS OF PERSONAL EFFECTS. ALL HAVE
BEEN PAID DIRECTLY BY OECD AND HAVE SIGNED SETTLEMENT
AGREEMENTS.

5. SINCE MISSION ACCEPTED OFFER OF SECRETARIAT TO UTILIZE OECD SPACE DURING RECONSTRUCTION OF OFFICES RATHER THAN RENT COMMERCIAL SPACE, OECD HAS BILLED THE DELEGATION FOR RENTAL AND CHARGES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1978 IN AMOUNT OF FRENCH FRANCS 1,563,710. THIS IS THE AMOUNT NORMALLY DUE IF THE FIRE HAD NOT TAKEN PLACE. THERE IS A SEPARATE CHARGE FOR RENOVATION OF TEMPORARY SPACE WE ARE OCCUPYING. (SEE PARIS 24538). IN VIEW OF FACT THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY FROM APRIL TO NOVEMBER OCCUPYING ONLY 740 SQUARE METERS INSTEAD OF OUR CUSTOMARY 1486 SQUARE METERS, LEGAL ADVICE AUTHORIZED BY STATE 61274 IS BEING SOUGHT ON WHETHER FULL CHARGE FOR REGULAR RENTAL IS APPROPRIATE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

6. OECD HAS THIS WEEK FURNISHED MISSION WITH SERIES OF LENGTHY REPORTS PREPARED BY OECD-HIRED FIRE SAFETY CONSULTANTS. COPIES OF REPORTS POUCHED TO EUR/RPE (PAUL LAASE). REPORTS, WHILE NOT CONCLUSIVE, TEND TO

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POINT FINGER AT MARINE GUARD'S OVERHEATED COFFEE POT AS CAUSE OF FIRE. THESE REPORTS ARE IN ADDITION TO THAT OF USG EXPERT CONTAINED IN PARIS 8151. MISSION DOES NOT HAVE TECHNICALLY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL AVAILABLE TO EVALUATE THESE REPORTS AND WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT ARRANGING FOR APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS TO REVIEW THE MATERIAL SO THAT ANY FINDINGS WHICH MIGHT AFFECT MISSION'S REOCCUPATION OF RECONSTRUCTED PREMISES MIGHT

BE CONSIDERED.

7. IN LETTER ACCOMPANYING REPORTS, OECD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STATES THAT "SEVERAL RECOMMENDATIONS PUT FORWARD BY THE EXPERTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN IMPLEMENTED, WHILE THE ARCHITECT AND A FIRE PREVENTION SPECIALIST ARE UNDERTAKING A THOROUGH STUDY OF THE OTHERS." MISSION'S RESPONSE HAS BEEN THAT WE WISH TO HAVE ASSURANCE THAT ALL HAZARDS HAVE BEEN INVESTIGATED AND CORRECTED, AND THAT THE BUILDING CONFORMS TO CURRENT FRENCH CODES AND IS CERTIFIED AS SUCH BY COMPETENT FRENCH AUTHORITIES (AS STATED STATE 84538).

8. WHILE MISSION HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH OECD IN ASSURING THAT ALL RECONSTRUCTION COMPONENTS, FURNITURE AND CARPETING MEET HIGHEST STANDARDS OF FRENCH BUILDING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CODE, WE WOULD WELCOME VISIT OF FBO REPRESENTATIVE TO ASSURE US FURTHER THAT ALL NECESSARY SAFETY PRECAUTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN. WITH PHASED REOCCUPATION PLANNED, FIRST FEW OFFICES WILL BE READY FOR OCCUPANCY IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, WHICH MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE TIME FOR SUCH VISIT.
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